1995

Vergilian Models for the Characterization of Scylla in the *Ciris*

Vanessa Gorman
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, vgorman1@unl.edu

Published in VERGILIUS 41 (1995), pp. 35-48.

VERGILIAN MODELS FOR THE CHARACTERIZATION OF SCYLLA IN THE *CIRIS*

The *Ciris*, a Latin epyllion of uncertain date and authorship, exemplifies the late-antique fascination with Vergilian imitation, as explored most thoroughly in the commentary by R. O. A. M. Lyne (1978).[1] Verse by verse, Lyne indicates what he feels are direct verbal borrowings of verses, half-verses, and phrases from Vergil. Yet for all the care Lyne dedicates to this task, for the most part he limits himself to the verbal dimension of the borrowings. The borrowings have other dimensions as well, and it is the purpose of this paper to examine these allusions from a thematic perspective. The focus will be on explicating the factors that led the *Ciris* poet to imitate the particular passages that he did, and the use to which he put these imitations in order to enhance his own poem. In the second half of this paper, the insights gained from the exploration of the methods and aims of the poet will be used to support my identification of a previously-unobserved imitation of a famous passage in Vergil's *Aeneid*.

The *Ciris* tells the story of Scylla and Nisus, best known to us from book 8 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Nisus was the king of Megara, a city under siege by King Minos of Crete. The city was secure so long as the tuft of purple hair growing on the top of the head of Nisus remained unshorn. However Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, fell in love with Minos and, as a token of that love, betrayed her father and her city by cutting the lock of hair while Nisus slept. Instead of receiving a reward for her treason, she was repulsed by Minos, who dragged her

[1]A select bibliography on the *Ciris* must include: F. Skutsch, *Aus Vergils Frühzeit* (Leipzig 1901); F. Leo, "Vergil und die *Ciris*," *Hermes* 37 (1902) 14-55; F. Leo, "Nochmals die *Ciris* und Vergil," *Hermes* 42 (1907) 35-77; S. Sudhaus, "Die *Ciris* und das Römische Epyllion," *Hermes* 42 (1907) 469-504; G. Nemethy, *Ciris* (Budapest 1909); W. Ehlers, "Die *Ciris* und ihr Original," *MH* 11 (1954) 65-88; Daniel Knecht, *Ciris* (Brugge 1970); R. O. A. M. Lyne, "The Dating of the *Ciris*," *CQ* ns 21 (1971) 233-53; M. L. Clarke, "The Dating of the *Ciris*," *CPh* 68 (1973) 119-21; R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Ciris* (Cambridge 1978).

The *Ciris* is first mentioned in the list of the juvenile works of Vergil compiled in the *Vita Donati* in the 4th century CE, and, as a result, it has secured a place in the *Appendix Vergiliana*. Yet, just as for the other poems in that collection, its authenticity has been so often called into question that few modern scholars have been bold enough to defend Vergilian authorship. While some critics assign it to the late Augustan period, most judge it to be an anonymous imitation of Vergil from the first, second, or even third century CE. Skutsch (1901) assigns the poem to Gallus. R. S. Radford ("The Juvenile Works of Ovid and the Spondaic Period of His Metrical Art," *TAPA* 51 [1920] 146-71 and "The Priapea and the Vergilian Appendix" *TAPA* [1921] 148-77) argues strenuously in favor of Ovidian authorship. Clarke (1973) and Lyne (1971) date it after Statius, to the second or third century CE. It is not my purpose to conjecture here about the author of the poem or its date of composition: the diversity of opinion betrays the fundamental impracticality of these pursuits. I make the conservative assumption that someone other than Vergil wrote the *Ciris* and that he did so at some time between the death of Vergil in 19 BCE and the lifetime of Donatus in the fourth century CE.

through the sea behind his ship until Amphitrite took pity upon her and changed her into a sea bird, the ciris. Jupiter then transformed her father into a sea eagle so that he could avenge himself through continual attacks upon the smaller bird.

Allusion is a technique practiced by all Latin poets,[2] and the author of the *Ciris* is no exception. He copies extensively (*imitatio*) from Vergilian models especially,[3] but where he attempts to surpass them (*aemulatio*), he invariably falls short. We will see that his use of word play comes across less as a refinement of his model than as simple verbal manipulation. His *inventio* can be seen to enhance his own poem by comparison to the master poet, Vergil, and it does succeed in creating the learned allusion for the privileged audience thoroughly familiar with the model. However the total effect reminds one less of Vergil's own sophisticated poetic technique than as a first step to the cento-style composition of later centuries.[4]

The *Ciris* poet's use of *imitatio* is easily established. Vergil tells the same story of Scylla and Nisus in the first *Georgic*, where he describes the fighting between the avian creatures in six verses:

> apparet liquido *sublimis in aere* Nisus,
> et *pro purpureo poenas* dat Scylla *capillo*:
> *quacumque illa levem fugiens secat aethera pennis,*
> *ecce inimicus atrox magno stridore per auras*
> *insequitur Nisus; qua se fert Nisus ad auras,*
> *illa levem fugiens raptim secat aethera pennis.*
> (*Geo.* 1.404–9)[5]

Each one of these six verses reappears in some form in the *Ciris*. The phrase *sublimis in aere* from *Geo.* 1.404 describes not Nisus but Scylla in one of the opening verses of the *Ciris*:

> Scylla novos avium *sublimis in aere* coetus
> (*Ciris* 49)

[2]See the discussion at J. Farrell, *Vergil's* Georgics *and the Traditions of Ancient Epic* (Oxford 1991) 1–25, esp. 11–12.

[3]Lyne (1978, note 1 above), esp. 36–47, also makes a case for extensive imitation of Catullus, Ovid, and the lost Neoteric poets.

[4]Lyne (1978, note 1 above) 36.

[5]I have added italics here and throughout this paper to represent words which are copied exactly, and have underlined words which are derived from the same root or are otherwise closely related in form or meaning. I have quoted the text of Vergil from the *OCT* edited by R. A. B. Mynors (1969) and the text of the *Ciris* prepared by Lyne (1978, note 1 above), occasionally changing punctuation.

The next verse from the *Georgics* is imitated three lines later in the *Ciris*:

> hanc *pro purpureo poena*m scelerata *capillo*
> (*Ciris* 52)

Scelerata, which occupies the same metrical *sedes* as *dat Scylla*, is in fact modifying the *Scylla* of verse 49, thus further binding together the two verses. Finally, the remaining four verses of the *Georgics* are repeated exactly in the last four verses of the *Ciris* (538–541).

In *Ecl.* 6.74–77, Vergil conflates Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, with the sea-monster of the same name. These verses are also cited by the *Ciris* poet in a passing reference to that variation of the story. He copies verses 75–76 exactly, and only altered the beginning of verse 77:

> *candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstris*
> *Dulichias vexasse rates et gurgite in alto*
> a! timidos *nautas canibus lacerasse marinis*;
> (*Ecl.* 6.75–77)

> *candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstris*
> *Dulichias vexasse rates et gurgite in alto*
> deprensos *nautas canibus lacerasse marinis.*
> (*Ciris* 59–61)

In view of these passages, it is impossible to argue that the author of the *Ciris* was not prepared to employ extensive borrowing from Vergil's poetry in the style of the learned Alexandrians. Furthermore, the motivation for choosing to imitate these two passages is as indisputable as the fact of the imitation itself. Since they discuss the same story, they are precisely the ones we would expect to see borrowed. The use that the *Ciris* poet makes of them is correspondingly straightforward. In the passage from the *Eclogues*, the poet shows off his learning by taking Vergil to task over the conflation of the two characters named Scylla, whereas the reproduction of four lines from the first *Georgic* serves the important narrative purpose of concluding the entire poem in an impressive way.[6]

In other Vergilian borrowings the motivation for choosing those particular passages for imitation and the use that is made of them have not been thoroughly examined. In this inquiry it will be most convenient to look first at those passages in which the author of the *Ciris* copies whole verses or nearly-whole verses, since the fact of the borrowing is not open to doubt in these cases. Subsequently this

[6]See Lyne's note on verses 59–61, 538–41 (1978, note 1 above) 127–28, 320–21.

study will turn to cases where the poet has more extensively manipulated Vergil's words and where the verbal likeness between the model and copy is therefore less pronounced.

The first example that we will look at is the borrowing, with only a slight alteration, of a verse from Vergil's account of the story of Philomela which follows immediately after that of the conflated Scylla (*Ecl.* 6.78–81):

> infelix *sua tecta super volitaverit alis*?
> (*Ecl.* 6.81)

> caeruleis *sua tecta super volitaverit alis*,
> (*Ciris* 51)

This passage probably caught the poet's eye and was apt for imitation because of common elements between the two stories. First, the metamorphosis of Philomela is an obvious model for the transformation of Scylla. Philomela and her sister, Procne, were transformed into birds after their lives were shattered by the rape of Philomela by Procne's husband. The second link between the stories is the relationship of blood kinship between Philomela and Scylla. In the mythological tradition attested outside the *Ciris*, Philomela was the daughter of Pandion, the son of Erichthonios, while the father of King Nisus of Megara was another Pandion, the son of Kekrops. In the *Ciris*, the two Pandions are conflated, making Philomela and Scylla aunt and niece, a relationship which the author of the *Ciris* points out in a short apostrophe dedicated to Procne and Philomela (*Ciris* 198–205; see especially *cognatos* at 201).[7]

While the poet's attention may have been drawn to this incident by the common elements of metamorphosis and kinship, the thematic similarity forges an even stronger link and makes it possible for the author of the *Ciris* to enhance his own poem by imitating this line. Two maidens are destroyed by the effects of overwhelming but completely inappropriate passions.

There is no question but that we are to remember Philomela when we read about Scylla. But we should also note that the stories are not completely analogous and should not be seen as such: rather the poet has emphasized the similarities in order to highlight the contrast between them. Philomela behaved properly: she refused to wrong her family by having relations with an unsuitable lover, her own brother-in-law, and was raped and mutilated as a consequence of her righteous refusal. Scylla, on the other hand, mutilated her own father by cutting off his hair and sacrificed her city in order to make herself attractive to an unsuitable lover, the enemy of her city, who then, instead of accepting her, spurned her love. The

[7]See Lyne's note on verses 101–2 (1978, note 1 above) 183.

author of the *Ciris* emphasizes Scylla's wickedness in contrast to the seemly conduct of her aunt.

The poet's method seems to be similar in the case of the allusion to the story of Damon in *Eclogue* 8. Three verses from Damon's song are copied exactly.

> *dum queror et divos, quamquam nil testibus illis*
> *profeci, extrema moriens tamen adloquor hora.*
> (*Ecl.* 8.19–20 = *Ciris* 405–6)

> *ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error!*
> (*Ecl.* 8.41 = *Ciris* 430)

Two other consecutive verses are separated and changed slightly:

> *praeceps aerii specula de montis* in undas
> deferar; *extremum hoc munus morientis habeto.*
> (*Ecl.* 8.59–60)

> *praeceps aerii specula de montis* abisses,[8]
> (*Ciris* 302)

> non sinis: *extremum hoc munus morientis habeto.*
> (*Ciris* 267)

As in the story of Philomela, there is a preexisting link to connect Damon with the story of Nisus and Scylla. The link in this instance is the name of Damon's beloved, Nysa, so very similar to the name Nisus. The tie may seem to be tenuous, but will be confirmed by the recurrence of the phenomenon in another imitation.

Once again, a commonality of theme makes this story ripe for imitation. Like Scylla, Damon is madly in love with someone who will not return his passion, and he contemplates suicide, just as Scylla does at one point (*Ciris* 277–282). But again the poet uses the similarities to emphasize the contrast between the two characters. While four of the five imitated verses are applied to Scylla, who, like Damon, is driven to extreme measures, the fifth verse represents a deliberate thematic inversion. At *Ciris* 302 it is not Scylla who, in her despair at being spurned, falls headlong to her death. Instead it is the daughter of Scylla's nurse who dies, fleeing the unwanted advances of Minos. With this allusion, as with the

[8]There are difficulties with the manuscript readings for this verse. *Montibus obisses* (K) is clearly wrong, while *montibus iisses* (Φ) offers a very difficult form of the verb. *Montis abisses* was suggested by Scaliger. See the discussion in Lyne (1978, note 1 above) 229.

allusion to Philomela, the author of the *Ciris* uses thematic contrast in order to tell us how Scylla should have acted. In this instance we have the example of propriety established by the nurse's daughter, who died rather than embrace her enemy.

A third borrowing of this type is taken from *Aeneid* 3:

> sacra mari colitur medio *gratissima* tellus
> *Nereidum matri et Neptuno Aegaeo*,
> (*Aen.* 3.73–74)

> linquitur ante alias longe *gratissima* Delos
> *Nereidum matri et Neptuno Aegaeo*;
> (*Ciris* 473–74)

The common element that clearly establishes the link is the island of Delos, which Vergil did not need to name because his further description made it clear (*Aen.* 3.69–79).[9] One verse is borrowed verbatim, while the other merely hints at its source material in the similarity of the two line-endings, the use of a passive verb, and the substitution of the name Delos for the generic *tellus*. In making this allusion the author of the *Ciris* establishes a thematic or contextual parallel. The scenes describe Delos as seen by Aeneas and Scylla from their ships. The courses of the ships that pass here may represent metaphorically the courses of the two lives. *Pius* Aeneas is going to Delos to ask the oracle's advice, which will lead him to seek his ancient motherland and found the eternal city there. The evil Scylla is being dragged by Minos' ship away from the father that she has betrayed and the city that she has destroyed. Therefore this is another example of an allusion that signals a thematic contrast between the piety of the two main characters.[10]

[9]The fact that the *Ciris* poet does find it necessary to supply the name indicates a weakness in his ability as compared to that of Vergil. Perhaps he was afraid that the allusion would not otherwise be noticed. Or perhaps he was aiming in this instance at a less learned audience.

[10]There are other interesting allusions of this sort which are less closely connected to the model thematically. Some examples follow.

The description of the sea-monster Scylla who is loved by Neptune is derived from the description of Minos' wife Pasiphaë in Silenus' song:

> a, *virgo infelix*, quae te dementia cepit? (*Ecl.* 6.47)
> *infelix virgo*: quid enim commiserat illa? (*Ciris* 71)

The scepter given to Minos resembles the crest (!) given to Romulus:

> educet. viden, ut geminae stant vertice cristae
> et *pater ipse* suo superum iam signat *honore*? (*Aen.* 6.779–80)
> quem *pater ipse* deum sceptri donavit *honore*, (*Ciris* 269)

The magic spell cast to make Nisus agree to the marriage is borrowed from a spell intended to bring Daphnis home:

> effigiem duco; *numero deus impare gaudet*. (*Ecl.* 8.75)
> despue ter, virgo: *numero deus impare gaudet*. (*Ciris* 373)

The possibility for narrative enhancement that is offered to the poet by thematic similarities between his story and Vergilian models is powerful in its own right. In some passages it is enough to serve as a basis for an imitation, even with the presence of no other linking element such as a common name. For example, when he describes the captive Scylla appealing to the gods for relief, the author of the *Ciris* turned to the story of Cassandra for source material:

> *ad caelum* tendens *ardentia lumina* frustra,
> *lumina, nam teneras arcebant vincula palmas.*
> (*Aen.* 2.405–6)

> *ad caelum* infelix *ardentia lumina* tendens,
> *lumina, nam teneras arcebant vincula palmas*:
> (*Ciris* 402–3)

There is a strong thematic link between these two stories. Both women belong to cities that were taken by siege and are now being led away as captives to an unknown fate. In their anguish, they both appeal to the gods for help. Again, the similarity helps us focus on the contrast. Cassandra tried to warn her people by openly forecasting the truth about the destruction of her city even though she was mocked for her efforts, whereas Scylla acted in secret to cause the destruction of her city.

In addition, a simple verbal manipulation is at work here and elsewhere. The author of the *Ciris* has moved Vergil's *tendens* to the end of the line to replace *frustra*, a word inappropriate to the new context—Scylla's prayers will be answered. He then filled out the line with *infelix*, obtained from the verse he had imitated in the story of Philomela at *Ecl.* 6.81 (as discussed above). That this was in fact the poet's procedure might seem dubious if he had not picked up individual words elsewhere, which in fact he does. The *caeruleis* of *Ciris* 51, which replaced the *infelix* of *Ecl.* 6.81, may have been displaced from another imitation at *Ciris* 394–95, where the watery cart of Leucothea was modelled after the chariot of Proteus in the fourth *Georgic*:

> caeruleus Proteus, *magnum* qui *piscibus aequor*
> *et* iuncto *bipedum curru metitur equorum.*
> (*Geo.* 4.388–89)

> illa etiam iunctis *magnum* quae *piscibus aequor*
> *et* glauco *bipedum curru metitur equorum*
> (*Ciris* 394–95)[11]

[11] *Caeruleus Proteus* could have been replaced by another proper name, but since the author of the *Ciris* wished to delay that name until verse 396 in order to pair it with Palaemon, he filled in the space with the neutral words *illa etiam*—less an improvement than a filler—and obtained *iunctis*

Thus a playful or clever recasting of Vergilian verses is part of the stock-in-trade of the author of the *Ciris*, one that can be illustrated even more clearly by examining a borrowing at *Ciris* 179. Lyne elucidates the clever changes rung by the poet there, and his explanation is a complicated one.[12] The verse describes Scylla's distraction from her domestic pursuits.

non Libyco molles plauduntur pectine telae;
(*Ciris* 179)

The clausula *pectine telas* can be found twice in Vergil, at *Geo.* 1.294 and *Aeneid* 7.14, but there is no precedent for *plaudo* as the action of the *pecten*.[13] However, Lyne discovered the probable source in *Aeneid* 6. His attention was drawn by the presence there of an equivalent to *Libyco pectine*, namely the ivory pick used by Orpheus on his lyre at *Aen.* 6.647: *iam pectine pulsat eburno*. Three verses earlier comes the phrase *pars pedibus plaudunt choreas*, where Vergil has varied the familiar formula, *pedibus pulsare terram*, with the use of the word *plaudere*. Lyne argues that the author of the *Ciris* noticed this interesting variation and copied it when he borrowed the phrase from three verses below, thus explaining our unexpected *plauduntur* at *Ciris* 179.[14]

This type of verbal manipulation cannot be said to outdo the Vergilian model in any way, but it does follow the pattern of the *doctus poeta*. It allows the *Ciris* poet to identify himself as learned in the epic tradition. At the same time, the reader who recognizes the allusion may feel himself to be part of the cultured elite.

To summarize, an examination of several instances of Vergilian imitation in the *Ciris* has brought to light interesting features of the poet's poetic technique. A link is often established between a prospective model and the story of Scylla through such a common element as a shared name (Nisus/Nysa) or ties of kinship (Philomela). Nor in the cases examined here were the imitations thus suggested to the poet used as mere verbal flourishes, to show familiarity with Vergil. Thematic similarities have also been shown to exist between Vergilian passages and the story in the *Ciris*. Such similarities (e.g., inappropriate loves) are used to highlight the severe moral failings of Scylla by establishing a contrast with the morally upright characters created by Vergil.

---

from the following verse. The *sedes* deserted by *iuncto* was then filled by a color adjective, *glauco*, which was probably suggested by *caeruleus*.

[12]Lyne (1978, note 1 above) 37–38.

[13]At Ovid *Metamorphoses* 6.57–58, the similar words *pavio* and *percussus* are used of the comb striking the threads, but not the loom as a whole. While synecdoche may account for this variation, direct dependence is still not established.

[14]Cf. the allusions from *Ciris* 124–25 to *Ecl.* 4.46–47, and from *Ciris* 280 to *Aen.* 6.406.

These observations of allusions to Vergil enhance our understanding of the *Ciris*. However, it is my further intention to use these insights into the allusive technique of the *Ciris* to support a new interpretation involving a significant allusion to the *Aeneid* that has been previously overlooked. I am referring to the famous episode in *Aen.* 9.168–449, the night foray of Nisus and Euryalus.[15] In Aeneas' absence, the Trojan camp was beset by a superior Italian force. When night fell, the lovers Nisus and Euryalus volunteered to slip through the enemy camp and convey a call for help to Aeneas. Shortly after they set out, however, they were sidetracked by the opportunity to slaughter a number of the sleeping Rutulians. After this delay, they were sighted by the Latin cavalry and Euryalus was captured. Nisus tried to sacrifice himself to save his young companion, but instead both men were slain.

From this brief summary it may seem that this story and that of Scylla are completely disparate, but there are features of the story of Nisus and Euryalus which make it ripe for imitation in the *Ciris*. The first, most obvious link between the two stories is the name Nisus. The name is extremely uncommon: only three individuals with that name occur in extant Greek mythology. Besides the king of Megara and the Trojan soldier, there is only a suitor of Penelope (Homer *Od.* 16.395).[16] Thus the occurrence of the similar name forms a link between the two stories, the like of which we have already seen in the allusion to the story of Damon and Nysa from *Eclogue* 8.

Moreover the name Nisus is not the only common element that connects the stories. A physical object provides a further link: in each of these two stories the crucial object, the cause of great suffering to both central characters, is a crest. In the story of Nisus and Euryalus, a crest appears twice. First, Iulus promised to them the red-crested helmet of Turnus as an incentive for the night foray (*Aen.* 9.270–71). Then the crest recurs when, in spite of the promised reward, Euryalus plundered a helmet for himself in the midst of the slaughter at the Rutulians' camp (*Aen.* 9.365–66). This theft proved fatal, for Euryalus was later betrayed when a light from the Latin cavalry glinted off it (*Aen.* 9.373–74). The helmet was the unmistakable cause of his capture and it ultimately brought death to both Euryalus and his lover.

In a similar way, in the *Ciris* the crest is the hinge upon which the fate of Megara turned. This time it was not the plume of a helmet, but a curious tuft of

[15]A brief bibliography on this topic must include: J. F. Makowski, "Nisus and Euryalus: A Platonic Relationship," *CJ* 85 (1989–90) 1–15; G. J. Fitzgerald, "Nisus and Euryalus. A Paradigm of the Futile Behaviour and the Tragedy of Youth," in *Cicero and Virgil: Studies in Honour of Harold Hunt*, ed. by J. R. C. Martyn (Amsterdam 1972), pp. 114–37; G. E. Duckworth, "The Significance of Nisus and Euryalus for *Aeneid* IX–XII," *AJP* 88 (1967) 129–50.

[16]Under the spelling "Nisos," W. Kroll (*RE* 17.1 [1936], col. 759, *s.v.* Nisos) lists these three as well as one historical character, the son of King Alketas II of Epirus (Diod. 19.89.3). Under the spelling "Nisus," Kroll lists the Latin Grammarian of the first century CE (entry 2, col. 760) and Ernst Honigmann offers a way station in Syria (entry 1, col. 759–60).

red-purple hair which grew on the head of the king.[17] As in Vergil's story of the night foray, the crest is pivotal to the outcome of the story. The city was under divine protection so long as the crest remained intact, and the climactic moment came when Scylla cut that crest:

> ergo iterum capiti Scylla est inimica paterno:
> tum coma Sidonio florens deciditur ostro,
> (*Ciris* 386–87)

By performing this impious act of violence against her father, she condemned herself and her people to defeat. In consequence for her misdeeds and as a sign of her disgrace, she received her father's crest as her own when she was transformed into a bird (*Ciris* 499–501).

Thus the story of Scylla is linked to that of Nisus and Euryalus by two common elements, the name Nisus and the narrative importance placed on a crest. These connections are parallel to those we have seen in other instances where the commonality of an element leads to allusion. A further parallel will be seen in regard to another dimension, namely the occurrence here also of a strong thematic connection between model and copy. This resemblance can be seen particularly between Scylla and Euryalus. Both are beautiful and young, and closely related to a man named Nisus. Both are safe as long as the crest remains untouched. But they are also deeply in love and inspired by that passion to perform the very bold action which will result in their own destruction. As Euryalus disobeys Ascanius in attacking the Rutulians, so Scylla disobeys her father. Neither can Nisus dissuade Euryalus, nor the nurse Scylla. Rather, both characters are inflamed with a rage for their task,[18] and both proceed at night against a sleeping, defenseless enemy who does not expect an attack.

[17] nam capite ab summo regis, mirabile dictu,
candida caesaries florebant tempora lauro
et roseus medio surgebat vertice crinis,
cuius quam servata diu natura fuisset,
tam patriam incolumem Nisi regnumque futurum
concordes stabili firmarunt numine Parcae.

nec vero haec urbis custodia vana fuisset
(nec fuerat), ni Sculla novo correpta furore, . . .
(*Ciris* 120–25, 129–30)

The obvious metrical difficulties in verse 121 do not affect my argument.

[18] [Euryalus] *incensus et ipse/perfurit* (*Aen.* 9.342–43). Cf. *Scylla novo correpta furore* (*Ciris* 130), and *venis hausit sitientibus ignem/et validum penitus concepit in ossa furorem* (*Ciris* 163–64).

These items are among the general thematic similarities that make the story of Nisus and Euryalus particularly apt for imitation in the *Ciris*. There are also more specific similarities and additional contrasting elements which enhance the characterizations in the *Ciris*. These features are more complex, and must be discussed in reference to the verbal element of the allusion from the *Ciris* to *Aeneid* 9. At *Ciris* 206–8, the poet imitates the words of Vergil at *Aen.* 9.175–76:

> omnis per muros legio sortita periclum
> *excub*at exercet*que* vices, quod cuique tuendum est.
> *Nisus erat* portae *custo*s, acerrimus armis,
> (*Aen.* 9.174–76)

> iamque adeo dulci devinctus lumina somno
> *Nisus erat* vigilum*que* procul *custo*dia primis
> *excub*ias foribus studio iactabat inani,
> (*Ciris* 206–8)

This imitation is concealed by verbal manipulation from all but the learned reader, who would recognize that the *Nisus erat* and *excub-* of the *Ciris* represent similar verse beginnings to *Aeneid* 9, but in reverse order. The root *excub-* occurs in Vergil as a verb while in the *Ciris* it is a noun. Similarly, the root of *custos* appears in both passages, but is manifested in the one as the concrete, in the other as the abstract noun. Both passages have a verse ending in *-is* (*armis* and *primis*) and the placement of the enclitic *-que* is at the same metrical *sedes*. *Portae*, a word more often used properly to describe the outer gates of a city or of a military camp, is replaced by *foribus* which, modified by *primis*, is appropriate to the outer doors of the palace. *Vigilium* may be suggested by *excubias* and so derived from *Aen.* 9.159 (*vigilium excubiis*). However, if a Vergilian source for *vigilium* may be uncertain, such a provenance for the words that end the imitation, *studio iactabat inani*, is undoubted. They come unchanged from *Ecl.* 2.5.

As usual, verbal imitation is accompanied by thematic similarities and contrasts that enhance the texture of the *Ciris*. The two passages perform a similar function within the context of each work: each describes the beginning of the night that will prove fateful to those involved. Next, the phrase *studio iactabat inani* fittingly takes its place in the *Ciris* because it describes the longing of the shepherd Corydon for an inappropriate lover.[19] However, the author of the *Ciris* has grafted these words onto the story of another kind of love, that of Nisus and Euryalus. This combination points a moral contrast between Scylla and the Vergilian characters. Nisus and Euryalus, united by a legitimate affection, together undertook a

[19]*Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin, / delicias domini* (*Ecl.* 2.1–2).

most praiseworthy endeavor. When their attempt failed, Nisus nobly joined his friend in death. Scylla's love, of course, drove her to actions that resulted in her own and her father's transformations—a pseudo-death—and were as far from praiseworthy as ancient morality could imagine.

Another contrast is suggested by the stilted collocation of *vigilium*, *custodia*, and *excubias*. This exaggerated combination of terms may emphasize the presence of the guard or, as Lyne argues, present a tautology to stress the irony of the wasted effort.[20] But it also serves to mark another contrast between the stories. Whereas Vergil's Nisus was wakeful as he performed sentry duty around the Trojan camp, the king of Megara was asleep behind doors that were guarded—but in vain! His enemy was already inside the house.

Thus the imitative technique evident at *Ciris* 207–8 is the same as those examined earlier. On the other hand, the reference in the *Ciris* to the story of Nisus and Euryalus differs in a significant way from the other allusions we have examined. The poet does not refer to only one passage of the Vergilian episode. Instead, having imitated the verses that begin the last adventure of the two lovers, he extends the connection by imitating a passage from among the last verses of the story. The allusion to the story of Nisus and Euryalus is thus made an encompassing one.

Vergil portrays the death of Euryalus in the famous verses:[21]

> volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus
> it cruor inque umeros cervix conlapsa *recumbit*:
> purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro
> (*Aen.* 9.433–35)

The author of the *Ciris* imitates these verses in his poem:

> tum coma Sidonio florens deciditur ostro,
> (*Ciris* 387)

> et caput inflexa lentum cervice *recumbit*,
> (*Ciris* 449)

Again the model has been subject to verbal manipulation. The verses differ substantially, but are also marked by clear similarities. *Ciris* 449 and *Aen.* 9.434 both have *recumbit* at line end and a form of *cervix* within the verse. Monosyllabics

[20]For the phrases *studio iactabant inani*, *vigilum . . . custodia . . . excubias*, and *primis . . . foribus*, see Lyne (1978, note 1 above) 187.

[21]Cf. R. D. Griffith, "Allusion in Vergil, *Aeneid* 9.435ff.," *Vergilius* 31 (1985) 40–44.

ending in *t* begin each verse (*it, et*). The next word begins with a *c* and the third with *in-*. The image they portray is the same: both characters lie in defeat with their heads bent back.

Ciris 387 and *Aen.* 9.435 have an even more remarkable affinity. The verbs derive from the root *caedere*; in fact, a late manuscript of the *Ciris* that is followed by Scaliger (MS sigma) contains the alternate reading *succiditur*. In addition, the root of *flos* appears in the same metrical *sedes* in both verses. Each contains a word meaning red or purple (*purpureus, ostro*), and the line endings are similar in sound (*aratro, ostro*. Moreover, the scansion of these two verses is identical. The content compares the cutting of the king's hair with the slicing down of the flower that is Euryalus.

Unlike the case at *Ciris* 207–8, the author of the epyllion has here separated the verses of his imitation. It is instructive to note that the separation is not haphazard, but highlights the crucial movement in the *Ciris*. Verse 387 describes the cutting of the fateful lock, while verse 449 portrays Scylla, rejected by Minos and dragged through the sea behind his ship. The two moments in the life of Scylla are linked through this imitation of the death of Euryalus. Seeing this connection, the reader will recognize its aptness, for the two events joined by a common allusion are also joined as cause and effect, crime and punishment.

Furthermore, by comparing the demise of Scylla with the death of the Trojan hero, the author of the *Ciris* makes a point about the virtue of piety and the regard in which the gods hold it. The comparison between the two characters merges into a poignant contrast. Euryalus is a model of filial piety. When he departed the Trojan camp, he took care to entrust his aged mother to Iulus, in whom emerged the *patriae pietatis imago* (*Aen.* 9.294). Scylla, on the other hand, concealed the *falsa pietatis imago* (*Ciris* 263) and is called *patris miseri patriaeque sepulcrum* (*Ciris* 131).

Again the rewards that these two characters receive from the gods are related, but crucially different. Both are given a kind of immortality. Euryalus becomes famous, gaining glory and praise: Vergil addresses him and his companion as *fortunati ambo* (*Aen.* 9.446), and promises them immortality in the memory of mankind (*Aen.* 9.446–47). For Scylla the reward for her deeds is infamy since she is *damnata deorum / iudicio* (*Ciris* 530–31). Her boldness obtains for her only a transformation into a ciris and an endless, futile flight from the vengeful attacks of the sea eagle who was her father.

In conclusion, when the *Ciris* poet sought a model against which to contrast his heroine, he found it not only in the greatest Latin epic, the *Aeneid*, but in one of the most famous paradigms of noble youth.[22] It would be difficult to argue that

[22]Fitzgerald (1972, note 15 above) 131, calls Euryalus the archetype for the motif of youth and, in particular, youth that has been seduced.

the author of the *Ciris* improved upon the complexity and emotional tension of this episode from the *Aeneid*,[23] especially in light, for example, of the awkward tautology of *vigilium*, *custodia*, and *excubias*. But he certainly alluded to it, and he did so in a way which followed the pattern he had employed in his other borrowings. He chose a story that was thematically related to his own and also had certain elements in common with it—in this case both the name and the crest. Then he used allusion to produce a dramatic effect: once the verbal allusion is recognized it would seem impossible for the reader to avoid grasping the thematic contrast between the Scylla of the *Ciris* and the Euryalus of *Aeneid* 9, which contrast reinforces the motif of Scylla's impiety, further emphasizing her tragedy. Unlike the other examples we have examined, the poet has made the allusion to Nisus and Euryalus difficult to identify in the first place. Although he imitates the first and last scenes of the episode—a feature which indicates the importance of the allusion—the verses are carefully transformed and the allusion is made intentionally complex. The *Ciris* poet verbally and thematically manipulates his model in order to enhance his own story and flaunt his erudition. The result is a challenge to his reader to make the connection to Vergil and thus join the category of the learned elite.[24]

Vanessa B. Gorman
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

[23]Cf. B. Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1964), esp. 408–13.

[24]I would like to thank Elizabeth Beckwith, Joseph Farrell, and Robert Gorman for reading and criticizing earlier drafts of this article.